

Responding to Dementia-Related Behaviors

If your parent is displaying aggression, agitation, apathy, wandering or other dementia-related behaviors, it may be a reaction to an unmet need. Use the PIECES approach outlined below to help determine the cause.

P Physical	Always rule out pain first. Is your parent hungry, thirsty, not feeling well or in need of a bath? Have they started or stopped any medications?
I Intellectual	Are they having trouble speaking, or having issues hearing, seeing or identifying objects and people? Do they believe they are in a different time or place? Are they hallucinating?
E Emotional	Are they experiencing depression or grief over a loss or major life change? Are they bored?
C Capabilities	Is your parent frustrated because they need help handling daily tasks such as eating, bathing or getting dressed?
E Environmental	Are changes in their surroundings triggering? Is the space too noisy? Might they find the temperature uncomfortable? Is it dark or cluttered?
S Social	Are they isolated? Are they overwhelmed by too many people around them? Do they feel as if their care provider is moving too fast, ignoring them or showing impatience?

It's important to recognize that dementia impacts the ability to communicate efficiently. Deciphering your parent's needs can take time and energy, so practice patience and don't take their actions personally.

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